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ABSTRACT

Three policy strategies interpreted as intended to empower teachers within the new policy context of school autonomy were studied. Teacher services in Kentucky's school councils seemed to have little effect on empowering teachers since the researchers found in two studies involving 168 and 318 Kentucky teachers that teachers were not even attracted to the job in the first place. Facilitators of teacher collegial groups (two facilitators in a high school) were found to have potential in empowering group members, provided the facilitators conceptualized their roles as learners and supporters of the classroom experimentation process. Selection of the facilitator by the principal was a key factor in this empowerment strategy. In a study of 15 nationally recognized professional development programs, professional development was an effective empowerment strategy when several factors converged at the school site: (1) an atmosphere of support and trust; (2) teachers assuming leadership roles through administrator encouragement; (3) voluntary participation combined with professional norms fostering teacher involvement; (4) diverse, active learning and self-directed learning experiences connected to teacher work and expertise; (5) integration of efforts to improve classroom teaching and learning with school-level improvement and professional development plans; and (6) professional development as a way of life. Implications for building school instructional capacity are discussed. (Contains 49 references.) (Author/SLD)

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School Councils, Collegial Groups, and Professional Development as Teacher Empowerment Strategies: Assessing the Evidence for Instructional Capacity Building

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Abstract

In the mid 1980s teacher empowerment emerged as the centerpiece of school reform for teachers in the U.S. The researchers examine three policy strategies interpreted as intended to empower teachers within this new policy context of school autonomy. Teacher service in Kentucky's school councils seemed to have little effect on empowering teachers since the researchers found in two studies that teachers were not even attracted to the job in the first place. Facilitators of teacher collegial groups were found to have potential in empowering group members--provided the facilitators conceptualized their role as a learner and supporter of the classroom experimentation process. (The principal selection of facilitator was a key factor in this empowerment strategy.) Professional development was an effective empowerment strategy when several factors converged at the school site: an atmosphere of support and trust; teachers assuming leadership roles through administrator encouragement; voluntary participation combined with professional norms fostering teacher involvement; diverse, active learning and self-directed learning experiences connected to teacher work context and expertise; integration of efforts to improve classroom teaching and learning with school-level improvement and PD programs; and professional development "as a way of life." In the last section, implications are made for building school instructional capacity, including suggestions for policymakers.

School Councils, Collegial Groups, and Professional Development as Teacher Empowerment Strategies: Assessing the Evidence for Instructional Capacity Building

In the mid 1980s there occurred a major policy shift in public education in the United States (US). Principals in the US had long complained that they lacked the autonomy to make major changes in their schools because of bureaucratic restrictions. Lamar Alexander, then Secretary of Education, and national-level educators then forged an informal bargain: "We'll govern less if schools will be responsible for the results" (Alexander, 1986, p. 202). Alexander had articulated the mega-policy trade-off between accountability to the public on the one hand and autonomy and flexibility for the school sites on the other. Students would be required to meet high performance standards (e.g., National Assessment of Educational Progress, Second and Third International Mathematics and Science Study, and state-constructed tests). With outputs specified as student outcomes, school sites then had the commensurate autonomy to meet those benchmarks (Finn, 1991; Keedy, 1994).

Policymakers can wave their wands and accountability measures can be mandated for schools. And, in the United States, they have done just that: All states except Iowa have curriculum frameworks and tests that purportedly are linked to objectives. Policymakers, however, cannot mandate "autonomy" in workplaces. The members of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986, p. 1) attempted to operationalize the term workplace autonomy when they make the assumption that

> [P]roperly staffed schools can only succeed if they operate on the principle that the essential resource is already inside the school: determined, intelligent, and capable teachers. Such schools will be characterized by autonomy for the school as a whole and collegial relationships among its faculty.

Albeit in vague terms, this new policy thinking advocates that schools be professional, not bureaucratic, workplaces. (In the latter central office administrators defined the work of teachers through passing-down orders to principals as the middle managers, who then transmitted these

orders "down" to teachers.) In schools characterized by autonomy, on the other hand, teachers empower themselves in providing a higher-quality service to their constituents (i.e., their students). Out of the mid 1980s teacher empowerment therefore emerged as the centerpiece of school reform for teachers. (Teacher empowerment is a process whereby school participants develop the competencies to take charge of their own growth and to resolve their own problems [Short & Greer, 1997, p. 134].) The framers of the Carnegie Report suggested that teachers are empowered through (a) fostering greater professionalism within the existing teacher corps, (b) redistributing authority from the administration to teachers, and (c) increasing collegial interaction.

In this paper our main purpose is to examine three policy strategies interpreted as intended to empower teachers within this new policy context of school autonomy. Winter, Keedy, and Newton examine teacher participation in school councils in Kentucky. An implied assumption in both studies was that the more teachers were attracted to the job of decision maker, the more empowered they would become as school leaders. In the third study Keedy analyzes the impact by facilitators on empowering teacher members in two collegial groups Gordon in the fourth study assesses teacher empowerment in fifteen nationally-recognized professional development programs as a program outcome.

We also have a second purpose in this paper. Policymakers envision teacher empowerment not as an end to itself, but a means to an end in increasing schooling's instructional capacity (Spillane & Thompson, 1997) to succeed with all students (Seeley, 1980). As pointed out by Seeley, what should matter is not what the teacher can do as measured by bureaucratized standards (e.g., certification and principal-conducted classroom observation) but what the student can do. So, after the three strategies are assessed, we make some implications as to the hypothesis grounding our assessment of these strategies: If we were not empowering teachers then we can expect little commensurate growth in schooling's instructional capacity. We first provide our conceptual framework centered on the term teacher empowerment.

Teacher Empowerment as a School Reform Centerpiece

Teacher empowerment has been defined by various authors as teacher enablement, liberation, autonomy, impact, leadership, power, authority, responsibility, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and professional growth. Through this process teachers develop an internalized locus of control (Frymier, 1987, p. 14). Short and Rinehart (1992) asked over 200 teachers what made them feel empowered. These researchers identified six dimensions of empowerment: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. Through the empowerment process teachers develop an internalized locus of control (Frymier, 1987, p. 14).

Empowered teachers use their professional autonomy to make school-wide, pedagogical decisions and to relate collegially with their peers in reconceptualizing schooling (Rosenholtz, 1986) to succeed with all students (Seeley, 1980). Teacher collegial norms then make for more collaborative teacher-student relationships in classrooms. Teachers empowered to deal more thoughtfully and effectively with school and classroom-level problems are more likely to create thoughtful, compassionate classrooms where students "grapple" with major dilemmas in maintaining our democracy (Sizer & Sizer, 2000) in becoming lifetime learners (Sizer, 1992). (Also see Strike [1993] and Giroux [1988] for different conceptions of teacher civic and moral obligations toward students.) The teacher-student relationship is transformed from that of students parroting decontextualized information back to teachers (Sizer, 1991) to that of collaborative inquiry (cf. Lampert, 1991). In taking charge of their professional growth as proactive and adept problem solvers, teachers maximize learning opportunities for students: Empowered teachers translates into empowered students. Classrooms become genuine learning communities where all students can (a) understand mathematical concepts, (b) interpret serious literature, (c) write creatively about their ideas and experiences, and (d) converse thoughtfully about history and science (Cohen & Hill, 1998).

Researchers are beginning to find some evidence of the connection between teacher empowerment and instructional capacity, as measured by improved student outcomes. Marks and Louis (1997, cited by Ferrara, 1999, p. 7) found that schools with high levels of teacher

empowerment were organized around the principles of professional community and collective responsibility for student learning. These researchers confirmed the findings of other researchers (e.g., Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, and Little, 1982) that teachers engage themselves in innovative classroom practices when experimentation is encouraged and expected.

How to facilitate teacher empowerment is a topic also addressed by numerous scholars. Changes in cultural norms, new teacher social practices and social knowledge, enabling leadership, as well as skill development in inquiry, group process, and communication have all been studied as pathways to empowerment (see Melenyzer, 1991; Clocker & Loadman, 1996; Wilson & Coolican, 1996). We now turn to our studies on three such strategies intended to empower teachers.

School Councils and Teacher Empowerment

Various states have initiated school reform programs that seek to empower teachers, principals, and parents by devolving school decision making from the district central office back to the school level via school councils. One such initiative is the school reform program initiated in Kentucky as a result of the 1990 Kentucky Educational Reform Act (KERA). According to Kentucky Revised Statute ß 160.345, school councils in Kentucky must be composed of two (2) parents, three (3) teachers, and the principal or administrator, or a multiple of this configuration. Councils are charged by statute to set policy in: curriculum, assignment of staff time, student assignment, scheduling, space allocation, planning and resolving of instructional issues, discipline and classroom management, and extracurricular programs.

There have been few, if any, studies about teacher attraction to school council positions such as those required by KERA (David, 1994). The policymakers who designed and implemented KERA never assessed the degree of teacher attraction to serving as a school council member. If the assumptions that teachers are attracted to school council service and perceive themselves empowered by council service are not valid, the efficacy of the decentralized governance feature of KERA, and of other similar decentralizing policies, may be questionable. There is reason to question whether teachers, for instance, are attracted to school council

positions because teachers in this circumstance must function both in the traditional role of classroom instructor and in the new role of policymaker.

Knowledge about the conditions under which teachers will actually participate in school-based decision making (Smylie, 1992, p. 53) can be enhanced by framing research about teacher attraction to school councils using existing job attraction theory. In studies grounded in the job attraction theory of Rynes and Barber (1990), Winter, Keedy, and Newton conducted two studies to assess the degree of attraction to school council service among randomly selected teachers from Kentucky. In both studies the dependent variable was teacher rating of a school council job. The measure for the dependent variable was an additive composite score composed of two items: (a) How likely would you be to pursue the job of school council member? and (b) How likely would you be to run for the job of school council member if nominated by other teachers? Teachers rated these items using 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = Not at all likely, 5 = Very likely).

In the first study Newton and Winter (1999) randomly selected teachers ($N = 168$) and rate simulated job descriptions for teacher positions on local school councils. The job descriptions varied according the job duties emphasized and according to who chaired the council. The independent variables in this study were: Council Job Attributes (instructional leadership, school management), Principal Council Role (chair, member with a teacher as chair), and School Level (elementary, middle, high school). There was no main effect for Principal Council Role; teachers did not prefer jobs on councils chaired by a teacher rather than by the principal. Stated another way, teachers did not prefer a council leadership structure giving teachers more authority in making school-wide decisions. Also, for those jobs rated by the teachers that had the principal chairing the council, as opposed to a teacher chairing the council, teachers preferred council positions emphasizing instructional job duties rather than school management duties. Teachers preferred jobs emphasizing their traditional role as classroom instructor rather than jobs emphasizing school management, the traditional role of the principal. This effect held across all school levels (elementary, middle school, high school).

In a second study with randomly selected teachers ($\underline{N}$ = 318) again serving as participants, Winter, Newton, and Keedy (2000) regressed the dependent variable (teacher rating of a school council job) on a large number of teacher characteristics and found that teacher attraction to council positions decreased as: (a) teachers gained experience serving on a school council and (b) the number of the teachers dependent children increased. In both the above studies, teacher ratings of a school council position failed to reach the midpoint (3) on either of the two 5-point scales forming the composite score for the criterion variable. Regardless of whether or not teachers had school council experience, their attraction to school council service was low-to-moderate at best. Also noteworthy was the finding that teachers with council experience were less attracted to council positions than were teachers with no council experience.

The school councils in Kentucky, and those in other states with similar school-based decision-making structures, cast teachers in the non-traditional role of school leader and require teachers to perform additional work over and beyond the work teachers normally perform in their traditional role as classroom instructors. This is asking a lot, especially in the case of married teachers from families with two working parents, both striving to find more time to spend with their children. A policy question arising from the above studies is: What conditions, including the use of rewards and incentives, would make school council service more attractive to teachers? Various reform researchers (e.g., Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994) doubt that teacher involvement in school councils will be successful without the use of rewards and incentives.

Teacher Collegial Groups and Teacher Empowerment

In this secondary analysis of the original study (Keedy, 1999), data had been collected through observation, interview, survey, and mining of documents. In this paper many of these data were reanalyzed around this question: To what extent did facilitators in two collegial groups help teachers take charge of their own professional growth? Such an analysis has saliency since reformers are connecting teacher leadership (in this case group facilitators) with empowerment.

In encouraging teachers to use their classrooms as learning laboratories, teachers in the position of facilitator operationalize leadership as an organization-wide resource shared by teachers (see Keedy & Finch, 1994). Teachers lead "teacher study groups" (Paquette, 1987) by encouraging ". . . experimentation and examination of more powerful learning activities with and for students . . . . Teacher leaders invite other teachers to similar engagements with students in the learning process" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998, p. 149).

Teacher study groups are based on the premise that teachers themselves are the best resource for professional growth and support as they engage themselves in changing and improving classroom practice. Teacher collegial groups, in particular, are designed to maintain a tight focus on individual teacher instructional improvement. Teachers (ideally from six to eight in number) first formulate year-long foci. Examples are: setting up learning stations, conducting writing conferences, and assessing student work. Teachers then develop achievable meeting-to-meeting "game plans" (incremental steps in achieving their year-long foci) over the course of eight meetings. At each meeting teachers update peers on progress made on game plans conceptualized at the previous meeting. Through this collegial interaction teachers conceptualize another game plan for experimentation during the two or three weeks preceding the next meeting. Teachers become analysts, problem-solvers, and action researchers of their classroom practice. They learn instructional strategies both individually from the experimentation cycle and collectively through group interaction (Keedy & Rodgers, 1991). As one TCG member, Ann's year-long focus (improving Calculus student note-taking and organization skills) included these game plans: (a) students express mathematical logical thinking in writing and share with group members on quadratic equations, (b) students read ahead in text on math concepts and identify most important ideas and take notes on these ideas (writing-to-learn) , and (c) teacher critiques these anonymous notes to model salient features from unimportant ones.

The three-hour meeting format consists of: a 15-minute colleague critique of a journal article related to the year-long focus as a "warm-up" activity; 20-minute presentations by individual teachers on their game plans; and debriefing and journal writing (45 minutes).

Presentations, the core of the TCG, follow these six steps: (a) presenter year-long focus and current game plan, (b) action research on game plan implementation, (c) colleague analysis and feedback, (d) group assessment on progress toward the year-long focus, (e) colleague suggestions for the next game plan, and (f) presenter selection of game plan.

Before we examine how the two TCG facilitators influenced their peers, we provide the schoolwide context, since both groups were from the same high school. Franklin High, located in a rural county near a major Southeastern metropolitan area, had 900 students (80% white; 20% African-American), 70 faculty, and the principal, Mr. Parrish, and two assistant principals (all 3 in their first year). Sixty percent of the parents worked in manual and technical trades, with 20% unemployed or on welfare, and 20% professional. Curriculum was organized into the academic (including four advanced placement courses), general, and vocational tracks. The first TCG centered on the math and science subject areas.

The Math and Science TCG

> Jessie, the facilitator of this group, above all perceived herself as a learner:
>
> The teachers accepted me as a learner: I also use things learned at the collegial group in my teaching. . . . We have had problems with our students not using critical thinking skills. Instructional changes can only happen when teachers converse with each other and release time provides this opportunity for conversation. Students cannot receive instruction in critical thinking unless teachers first model it with each other.

In playing learner role within the TCG, Jessie displayed a sensitivity to peer group dynamics. She varied the teacher presentation order to maximize intellectual dialogue; yet she remained firm in following the TCG meeting format for year-long foci and game plans. She quietly insisted on TCG members following the six-step presentation and she distributed copies of the steps at the first meeting. Several times she diplomatically suggested that it was time for the next step: "How can we help Melba for her next game plan?" (Presumably, following the six steps encouraged teachers to reflect on their game plans and to elicit peer advice for suggestions to be experimented upon for the next meeting.)

Observation data imply that Jessie through interactions with her peers demonstrated the importance of teachers being inquisitive about their work. Jessie participated in the group assessments of the presented game plans (e.g., with Nadine the importance of communicating to students the rules for cooperative learning groups). Presentations given by Melissa and Nadine provide evidence that teacher critique was accepted as a group norm by the TCG members. After critiquing her last game plan because there was little student input after the speaker's lecture on chromosome mapping and after receiving suggestions from colleagues, Melissa formulated her next game plan: students brainstorming questions to ask the next speaker on the day preceding the classroom visit.

In discussing her game plan (students helping their peers with homework problems), Nadine professed that cooperative learning groups were far harder to implement than anticipated. Ann suggested that Nettie consult a text on cooperative learning groups. Nettie then formulated her next game plan: students using work groups to complete seatwork problems.

Ann summed up Jessie's interactions with the TCG members:

> Jessie guided us in our goals, offered suggestions, and [when off task] reminded us why we were there. She was not autocratic ("Here's how it is going to be done") but operated as a facilitator ("Here is the outline--how can we best implement it?"). So instead of a predetermined order of presentations, order depended on needs of presenters at that particular meeting. Jessie was a guide and gave direction but was never intrusive.

Mr. Parrish, the principal, in confirming that the presentation steps were clear and teachers bought in to following them, also shared that Jessie was respected for what she had to add to the group.

Jessie demonstrated evidence that she helped her colleagues' teachers take charge of their own professional growth through self-critique their pedagogy. Jessie seemed to mirror the relationship with others that became the group norms for teachers relating to each other. She had "earned her stripes" by helping to set collegial group norms and not by imposing the authority of her position as facilitator. We now turn the Danielle, the facilitator of the second TCG.

The Interdisciplinary TCG

Another TCG was formed that spring for the next academic year. According to Mr. Parrish, the position of second facilitator would be a good opportunity for Danielle, since she had been a member of the first TCG and since she was headed for an administrative position. Danielle valued the TCG for reasons that differed from those of Jessie:

> The TCG process opens up communication among different departments. Franklin High is beginning to adopt shared decision making and several TCG members are in the faculty council [currently being formed]. Teachers learned that they could express opinions and not get fired if their opinions differed from those of administrators.

Although the teachers expected her to exemplify the importance of teacher as leader, Danielle's actions did not demonstrate this norm within the group. Far from centering teacher group interaction around the problems of practice, Danielle did not fulfill this group expectation, as pointed out by Sara:

> Her [expected] role was to keep people on task. She also was expected to challenge us to be receptive and open to criticism and support. Sometimes other members appeared to fulfill Danielle's role. Her personality was not right for the role. She was not "objective" and some people dominated presentation time.

Observation data did not provide any evidence that Danielle valued teacher attempts to examine their classroom practice around success or lack their of in implementing their game plans. She made no effort to intervene when Cathy interrupted Benida's presentation or when Shirley interrupted Tricia. Other than Cathy's question to Harry, members seemed to talk past each other. Not coincidentally, presenters did not refer to their game plans in summing up their year-long foci at the last meeting.

Whereas Jessie let teacher needs determine the presentation order, Danielle determined the presentation order of teachers in the second TCG and simply announced at the last meeting that members were to sum up their accomplishments. Far from setting collegial norms around classroom problems of practice, Danielle seemed preoccupied with issues of power of position.

Patricia, another TCG member, implied that the TCG almost seemed to be "owned" by Danielle because she was its manager:

> In one meeting we arrived at the TCG meeting upset at recent events at school. We spent our time discussing administrative policy about which Danielle was particularly critical. This topic consumed most of the three hours.

The group dynamics surrounding Danielle and her relationship with the TCG colleagues took on a different climate from that of Jessie's group. Danielle related to teachers in a hierarchical fashion -- almost as if she were using the TCG as a springboard for administration. Consequently, group interactions lacked focus on problems of practice in classrooms through critique of game plans. The data provided little evidence that Danielle's leadership contributed to teachers taking charge of their own professional growth.

Jessie and Danielle seemed to connect their personal valuations to their actions with very different results. Jessie valued her own professional growth and this valuing extended itself in setting a group norm of teacher critique and classroom problems of practice. The term "power" meant an enabling capacity to Jessie: teacher ability to grow professionally. Danielle's actions, conversely, implied that she exerted positional power "over" her colleagues. Far from teacher interactions centering themselves around problems of practice, they seemed to center on whatever Danielle wanted them centered on.

Not surprisingly, Jessie's teachers game plans for each teacher also were analyzed as "more tightly focused" on instructional improvement and they were assessed by a panel of experts as demonstrating more "professional growth" than the group facilitated by Danielle (see Keedy, 1999). So interview, observation, and document mining "triangulate" in establishing a clear connection between the facilitators' valuation of their role and their success, or lack thereof, in helping the teachers empower themselves in improving upon their pedagogy.

Professional Development

Changes in cultural norms, new teacher social practices and social knowledge, enabling leadership, as well as skill development in inquiry, group process, and communication have all

been studied as pathways to empowerment (see Melenyzer, 1991; Clocker & Loadman, 1996; Wilson & Coolican, 1996).

Given the above dimensions of teacher empowerment, it would seem that professional development (PD) would be a powerful vehicle for empowerment. For most PD programs, however, such has not been the case. Mile's (1995) description of typical PD indicates that it is anything but a process leading toward empowerment:

> A great deal of what passes for "professional development" in schools is a joke-one that we'd laugh at it if we weren't trying to keep from crying. It's everything that a learning environment shouldn't be: radically under-sourced, brief, not sustained, designed for one size fits all imposed rather than owned, lacking any intellectual coherence, treated as a special add on rather than part of a natural process, and trapped in the constraints of the bureaucratic system we have come to call "school". In short, its pedagogically naive, a demeaning exercise that often leaves its participants more cynical and no more knowledgeable, skilled, or committed than before. (p. vii)

Miles's description of PD may be the norm, but across the nation there are exceptions to that norm: PD programs that foster teacher empowerment do exist. The purpose of this study was to (a) identify PD programs that led to teacher empowerment as well as the improvement of teaching and learning, and (b) describe and compare the major characteristics of those programs.

Methodology

The case study method was used to describe and compare fifteen nationally recognized PD programs, including description and comparison of characteristics facilitating teacher empowerment. The researcher used the reputation technique through which experts nominated high-performing PD programs. Selection of programs for intensive field visits was based on review of information provided by the schools on program (a) consistency with research-based characteristics of successful PD reported in the literature, (b) efficacy in facilitating teacher empowerment, (c) efficacy in improving teacher instructional effectiveness, and (d) efficacy in improving student academic achievement. Case studies of selected schools included (a) mining

of documents (meeting minutes, PD plans and schedules, internal program evaluation, action research reports, student outcomes, teacher and school portfolios), (b) interviews of central office administrators and staff developers, principals, school leadership teams, and teachers, and (c) observations of PD activities and classroom lessons in which teachers applied skills learned in PD activities. Archival data, interview transcripts, and field notes were analyzed inductively to develop contextually-rich cases. Next, cross-case analysis was performed to identify key attributes common to all programs.

Results

There were many pathways to effective professional development and teacher empowerment. Successful PD included programs in such areas as skill development, peer coaching, study groups, action research, teacher leadership, school-university partnership, collaborative teams, curriculum development, instructional technology, block scheduling, student literacy, and the improvement of student assessment. Each of these programs resulted in teacher empowerment, instructional improvement, and improved student achievement. Individual case studies will be reported in a separate work (Gordon, in process). This report will focus on characteristics identified across programs, each of which is explained below.

An atmosphere of support and trust. In all of these successful PD programs there was an atmosphere of support and trust between leaders and teachers. This began with a commitment by leaders to teacher PD and empowerment. The commitment was demonstrated through moral and material support, including the provision of time and resources. Leader support eventually led to peer support. One teacher discussed such support:

> Even though we have four walls and a door, it's like every classroom is connected. I go down to the fourth grade and say, "Do you have this kind of book?" I can go to any classroom teacher, the library, the computer technician, and if they don't have whatever you need, they will tell you somebody to check with.

The mutual support exhibited across these programs, in turn, led to a reciprocated, personal trust that leaders and teachers are concerned with each other's growth and development,

and professional trust in colleagues' expertise and commitment to student-centered learning. Mutual support leads to increased trust; increased trust leads to an increased collegial willingness to request and provide support.

Teachers assuming leadership roles. Leaders encouraged teachers to assume leadership roles in PD programs. Teacher leadership was not only encouraged but expected. A teacher commented on this attribute:

> There is an expectation of leadership. The principal is looking around and thinking. "I have a couple of teachers around here that would make great leaders." I think there is a culture of leadership where people are identified to be leaders, and it's recognized that they have abilities, interests, and skills.

Teachers in these PD programs responded to expectations for teacher leadership with a willingness both to provide leadership and to support the leadership of others, an assertion supported by this teacher's observation:

> There is a culture of support, and acknowledgment that there are certain people on the staff that are very knowledgeable in certain areas. And there isn't reluctance on this staff to take on, unofficially, roles of leadership.

Teachers reported that leadership opportunities made them more committed, more skilled, and better able to articulate their craft. They perceived the school culture to be more collaborative, collegial, and growth oriented as a result of teacher leadership.

Voluntary participation; professional norms of involvement. Interestingly, these successful programs included few mandatory PD activities. Yet each of the programs had high levels of teacher participation. This was due in part to a cultural norm calling for participation in activities likely to lead to professional growth and the improvement of student learning. The norm of involvement, then, was linked to PD that was perceived as valuable. The perception of value, in turn, was based on a number of factors. All of the programs were either site-based or site-adapted. Teachers were involved in the planning, implementation, and assessment of PD activities. Programs were focused on the improvement of student learning.

Relevant learning activities. Although all of the programs had collective goals, they also provided diverse learning activities aimed at meeting varied needs and interests. Active learning was the norm in all programs. Learning focused on curriculum, instructional strategies, and student assessment that could be directly applied to classroom practice. Present across all programs were collegial dialogues and collaborative learning focused on the teaching-learning process. An example of such collegiality and collaboration is provided by the following discussion of weekly teacher meetings to improve the assessment of student writing:

> Every week . . . the teachers bring samples of their students' work, and would try scoring them. . . . As we did the scoring, we'd talked about it. Sometimes we would copy student samples and all of us would score the same ones, or sometimes we'd partner in study groups. Through that dialogue we really became more professional in looking at student writing and thinking "What does this tell me? What do I know about what my students can do based on this piece of work? And what does this tell me that I need to do instructionally?" Discourse in small groups was what pulled our understanding together.

Integration. A final characteristic of these successful programs was the integration of a number of professional development goals into comprehensive, coherent programs. The programs integrated the goals of teacher empowerment, the improvement of classroom teaching, and whole-school improvement. It was not unusual for the schools to have individualized and team professional development programs linked to school-level improvement efforts.

Professional development as "a way of life". Participants in these PD programs reported that continuous, intense PD had become a centerpiece of the social fabric in their schools. Principals and teachers with previous experience in work settings where PD was not taken seriously said they could not conceive of returning to such intellectually-impoverished settings. PD was considered the indispensable, integrating force for (a) teacher development, (b) the improvement of teaching and learning, and (c) continuous school renewal.

Professional development can lead to and sustain teacher empowerment and it is more likely to do so when program attributes converge with professional norms characterizing ongoing

collegiality and collaboration. Opportunities for teacher self-directed learning and diversity of activities can result in active, personal practical knowledge grounded in teacher classroom experience. PD, individual teacher improvement in classroom teaching and learning, and school-level improvement are interconnected and make a synergistic contribution to teacher work life. Teacher empowerment emerges as a cultural by-product of the norms of trust, mutual support, voluntary participation, and teacher leadership.

Implications for Instructional Capacity Building and Lessons for Policymakers

Legislators might mandate teacher participative decision making. Mere implementation, however, is no guarantee that teachers will be empowered in ways that increase the instructional capacity of schools. Such may be the case in Kentucky's school councils. In the first study teachers might have rated job descriptions of principals as council chairs emphasizing management less favorably than they rated those emphasizing instruction to avoid conflicts when teachers would be making decisions in a zone traditionally allotted to principals. Principals have had exclusive authority for making managerial decisions about issues such as funding and school resources (Cuban, 1988) . Teachers may be reluctant to assume a role requiring them to make decisions that challenge the traditional managerial authority of principals. In Kentucky's school councils teachers are expected to be managers (i.e., major decision makers). The second study's findings--that teacher attraction to council positions decreased as teachers gained experience serving on a school council and the number of the teachers' dependent children increased--also are not encouraging. Council service requires teachers to assume duties in addition to those of the traditional classroom teacher. Yet Kentucky did not include in their school council policy rewards for teachers service.

If teachers are not perceiving themselves as attracted to the job of council member, there is logically little positive implication that they would find themselves empowered in council positions. One therefore cannot make the assumption that participative decision making has any connection to improving instructional capacity. Other researchers have voiced skepticism about the efficacy of school councils (and their counterparts in other states.) Lindle (1995) suggested

that until teachers as instructional leaders chaired school councils and set curriculum-focused agendas, councils might remain mired in administrative minutiae. Yet the studies examined in this paper imply that teachers are not even attracted to council service, never mind instructional leadership.

Other researchers have expressed skepticism about participative decision making in public education. Rinehart, Short, and Johnson (1994) concluded that there was little evidence that teachers perceived themselves as more empowered as a result of school councils. In another study the norms of propriety on issues and civility in interactions successfully countered the provisions of shared governance in Salt Lake City: Teachers and administrators talked an esoteric language, among other things, in precluding parent influence (Malen & Ogawa, 1990). Even the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) does not recommend site-based decision making as a way of professionalizing teaching. It does recommend schools headed by lead teachers who might hire administrators to handle managerial responsibilities (e.g., plant maintenance, student discipline, contracting with vendors).

Under certain conditions teacher collegial groups may empower teachers through the group norms of experimentation and dialogue and through professional support to reconceptualize their teaching around the student as active learner. A key element to empowering TCGs may be facilitators who value teacher experimentation and inquiry about their practice. There is some logic to the notion that teacher experimentation and critique of their pedagogy (at least as exhibited through professionally-demanding game plans) could pay off in the long run in improved student outcomes.

Of crucial concern here is how facilitators are selected. At Franklin High School Mr. Parrish carefully hand-picked Jessie because of her reputation for collegial relations with math and science teachers. In doing so Parrish demonstrated his commitment to the TCG program. When it came to selecting the facilitator for the second TCG Parrish seemed to disappear from the scene. Danielle self-selected merely because she was the only teacher interested in he position who had been in the first TCG. Should this be the criterion for selection of facilitator?

One hour of principal work and the second group may have had similar teacher empowerment results of the first group. Districts can provide principal study groups through which its members can become aware of the importance of their actions on organization structures with the potential to empower teachers--provided the right facilitator is selected.

Perhaps the strategy with the greatest potential both in empowering teachers and in producing improved student outcomes is professional development. A selection criterion in Gordon's national study of 15 successful sites, after all, was improved student outcomes. Professional development may lead to and sustain teacher empowerment, especially when research-based program attributes converge with professional norms that characterize teacher daily interaction. Common programmatic characteristics perceived by teachers as empowering included: an atmosphere of support and trust; teachers assuming leadership roles through administrator encouragement; voluntary participation combined with professional norms fostering teacher involvement; diverse, active learning and self-directed learning experiences connected to teacher work context and expertise; integration of efforts to improve classroom teaching and learning with school-level improvement and PD programs; and professional development "as a way of life."

Teacher collegial groups and professional development share two programmatic characteristics: They provide opportunities for teachers to improve upon problems of classroom practice and they relate directly to professional self-efficacy (Ashton, 1986). (Other empowerment strategies sharing these characteristics include teacher work redesign, curriculum development, and lead teacher [Hart, 1990].) Perhaps the linkage between teacher empowerment and instructional capacity is far more cultural (changing workplace norms) than structural (mandating teacher decision making). We are trying to change the norms among teachers and between principals and teachers (cf. Keedy, 1991). Several researchers may agree with this assessment. "The first step toward a more professional culture is the development of collegiality among teachers" (Rallis, 1990, p. 198). Empowered teachers transform the traditional norms of teacher classroom isolation, cordiality, and privacy (Lortie, 1975) into those of collaborative

activity, shared responsibility for learning, and independent work configurations (Ferrara, 1999). McCarthey and Peterson (1989) envisioned the teacher not only as decision maker but also as colleague, leader, and learner. In setting a new norm for US schooling, teachers as leaders join principals in improving the instructional capacity to succeed with all learners.

The school council, on the other hand, has its historical roots in the participative decision making in business and industry in the 1940s and early 1950s (Short & Greer, 1997). (The saliency of private sector participative decision making has resurfaced in part through the work of Peters & Waterman, 1982.) The long-standing assumption is that worker input in organization decisions results in improved productivity and worker satisfaction. But is the private sector workplace necessarily transferable to its counterpart in the public sector? Teachers and principals are charged with helping students achieve schooling's four goals: academic knowledge, vocational pursuits, civic responsibility, and personal enrichment (Goodlad, 1984). Public schools have not provided teachers comparable workplace autonomy since they are by function partly custodial (students must have supervision by certified personnel) and since policymakers cannot, or have not, provided the incentives associated with the private sector.

Nor are public schools--at least for the time being--subject to marketplace conditions as is the private sector in changing their product to maintain economic niches. Yet in Kentucky schools whose student outcomes meet the criteria for "reward status" receive bonus money which can be divided up in any way the councils chose. Edison Project schools also have worker incentive plans in sharing bonus money given to schools which meet ambitious growth targets. So perhaps we may be seeing the merging of the public and private sector within the schooling industry, as seen in the sharing of bonus (i.e., incentive money) in both Edison Project schools (private) and in Kentucky's schools (public). Participatory decision in our public schools may become more efficacious as they increasingly are forced to find marketplace niches in competing with an environment frequented by: (a) a growing number of charter schools, (b) increasing enrollment in Catholic schools, and (c) vouchers, which could open up consumer pocketbooks to private schools. So in the long run school councils and their potential to link empowerment with

productivity within the marketplace context might outpace alternative strategies like teacher collegial groups and professional development, both of which derive their saliency in empowerment and productivity in the potential for cultural change.

Is this a lesson here for policymakers? School councils as an empowerment strategy seems grounded in private sector ideology whereas TCGs and professional development are grounded in teacher professionalism (vigorously supported by the teacher national associations). These strategies are not only be different; they may work at cross purposes. Are policymakers aware of this potential policy conflict in their zeal to create higher-performing schools?

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